



WORD PLAY

LAST WORD, FIRST WORD



Creating a logical linking between phrases by repeating the final word of one phrase as the first word of the next.



Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering, and that way lies the dark side, young Skywalker.

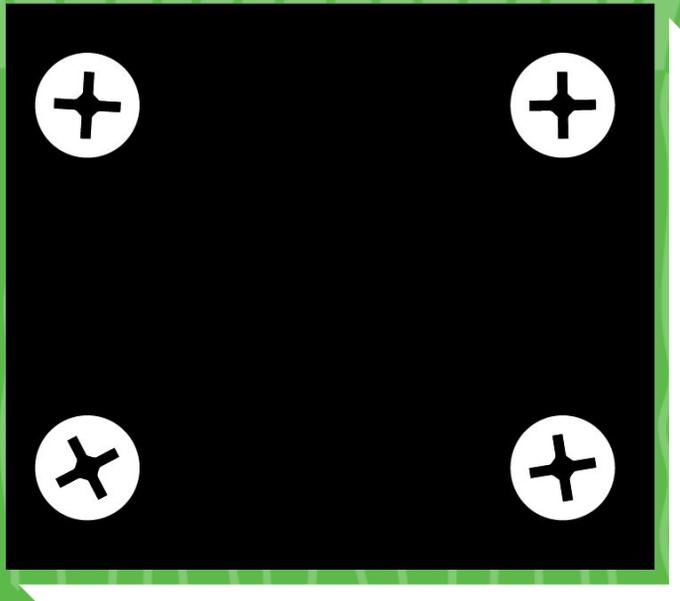
- Star Wars

The land of my fathers. My fathers can have it!

- Dylan Thomas



STRENGTH



Proving that if something can withstand the toughest of challenges, then it can withstand anything.



How does the man who drives the snowplow, drive to the snowplow?

- Volkswagen

If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere...

- Frank Sinatra, "New York, New York"



STRIKE-OUTS



Framing a discussion by discounting anything that harms your case.



It's not about the destination, it's about the journey...

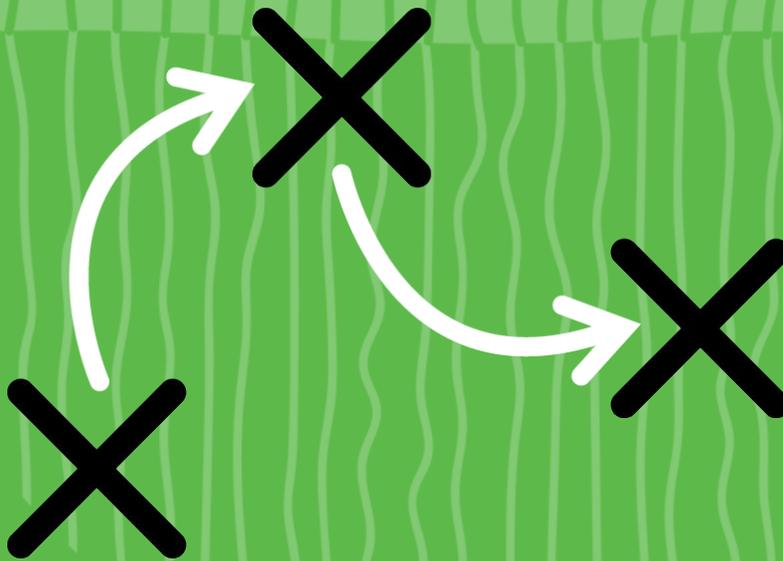
- Mass Effect 3

It is not our abilities that show what we truly are... it is our choices.

- Dumbledore, Chamber of Secrets



CONCESSION



Strategically conceding one point so that you can win a wider one, or reframe the argument.



Yes, you're right about that, and the question is how do we move on from here?

- Anonymous

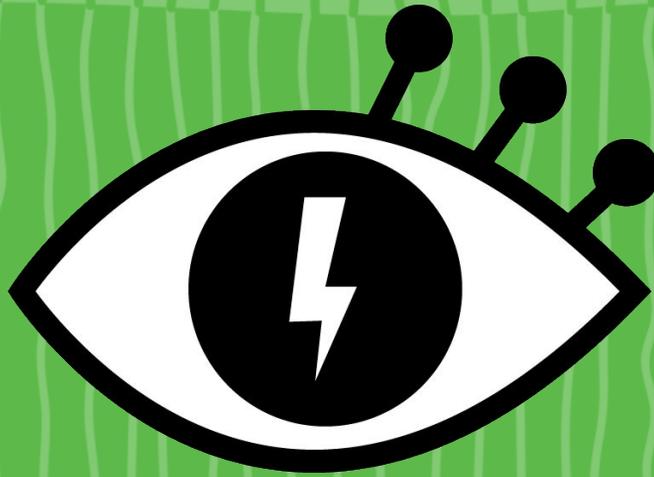
Sweet, maybe. Passionate, I suppose. But don't ever mistake that for nice.

- Love and Monsters



CONCESSION

OMEN



Warning of negative consequences if specific actions are either taken or left undone.



For more information on lung cancer, keep smoking.

- The Lung Association

I think 9/11 will turn out to be not nearly as bad as the next mass casualty attack against the United States.

- Dick Cheney



OMINATIO

BECAUSE



Evidence-based persuasion in its simplest form – using the word ‘because’.



I know I have a heart because I feel it breaking.

- The Wizard of Oz

Better sound through research.

- Bose Corporation



SHOW THE WORK



Emphasizing your point by making a statement, then questioning that statement, and finally answering the question yourself.

The economy is overheating. Why do I say this? Because inflation is rising rapidly.

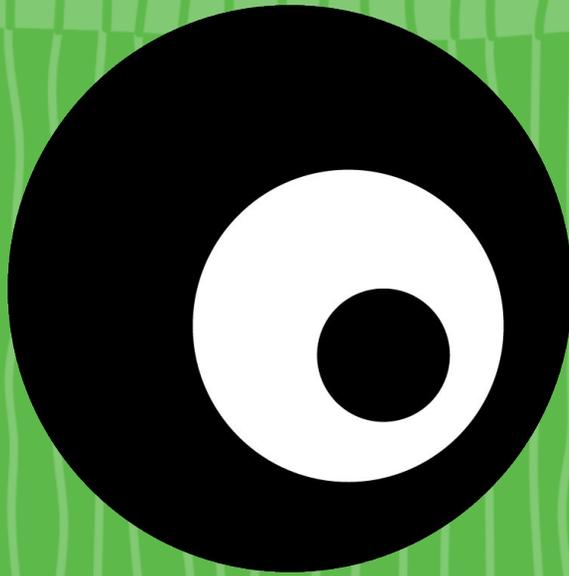
- Anonymous

Old age is superior to youth. Why? The body has been tamed and the mind ripened with wisdom.

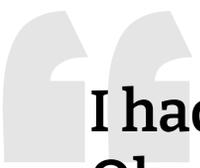
- Anonymous



SUMTOTAL



Persuasive argument where two statements logically lead to a third – the conclusion.



I had no idea you could milk a cat.
Oh yeah, you can milk anything with nipples.
I have nipples, Greg. Could you milk me?

- Meet the Parents

Smiling is my favorite. You make me smile. That makes you my favorite.

- Elf



ALGEBRA



$$1 + x = 3$$

Persuasive arguments contain three parts (two statements and a conclusion). Enthymemes have one of those parts missing, making the audience work out the missing element.

I have come here to chew bubble gum and kick ass. And I'm all out of bubble gum.

- They Live

Have you ever had a bad time in Levi's?

- Levi's Jeans



CRAZY COMPARISON



Persuasive argument where two statements logically lead to a third – the conclusion.



It's like feeding horses chocolates.

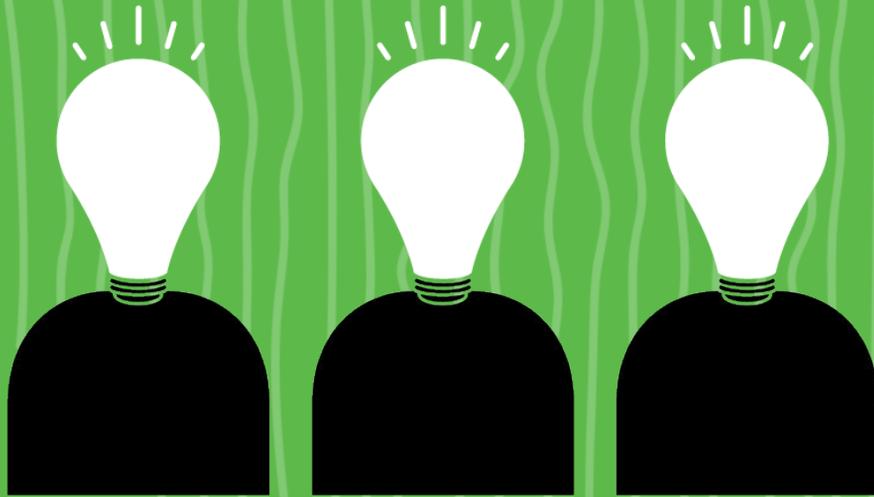
- Anonymous

India's trip to Mars, at a price of \$74 million, cost less than Gravity the Hollywood movie.

- New York Times



EVERYONE KNOWS



Supporting your case by calling on the common knowledge or experience of the audience.



Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

- The Ad Council

Once a Marine, always a Marine.

- Marine Corps



MY EXPERIENCE



Supporting your case by referring to your own experiences.



I knew Jack Kennedy... Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy.

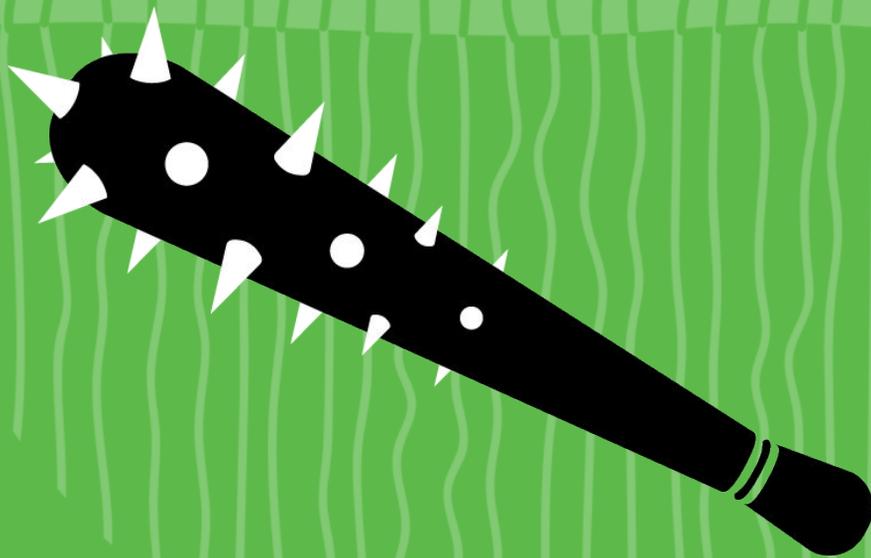
- Lloyd Bentsen

In my experience, poor people are the world's greatest entrepreneurs.

- Muhammad Yunus



THE STICK



Threatening the audience with an ultimatum – but only to be tried if you really mean it!



You're either with us, or against us!

- President George W. Bush

Vote for me, or the puppy gets it!

- Australian Financial Review



ARGUMENTUM AD BACULUM

CASE STUDY



Giving a clear example or a case study.



Kyle from California lost 25lbs after 9 weeks.

- Hydroxycut

Our tablets undergo over 25 durability tests and are designed to withstand forces of 1,000 g's.

- Amazon Fire Tablets



EXEMPLUM

PREBUTTAL



Stamping out objections by you raising them before the audience can, and then immediately supplying the answer.



Despite what some people think, advertising can't make you buy something you don't need.

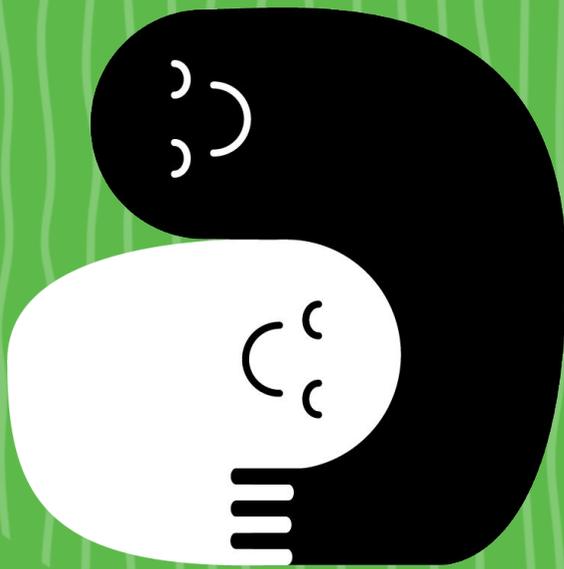
- American Association of Advertising Agencies

Everything in this room is edible. Yes, I am edible but that, children, is called "cannibalism..."

- Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory



COMMON GROUND



Using a question or a statement to show the audience that you feel the same way as they do.



We all feel the same way about Fridays.

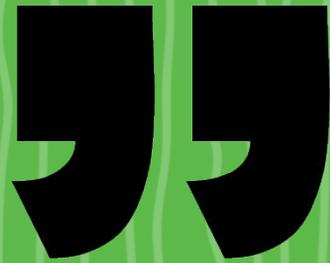
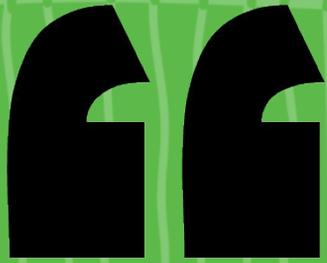
- The Larson Lingo

What do you think? Are we a bit weary?
Shall we stay here for a while?

- Anonymous



QUOTE



Quoting well known people, sayings, or even song lyrics as a way to establish a connection with your audience.



The times they are a changing.

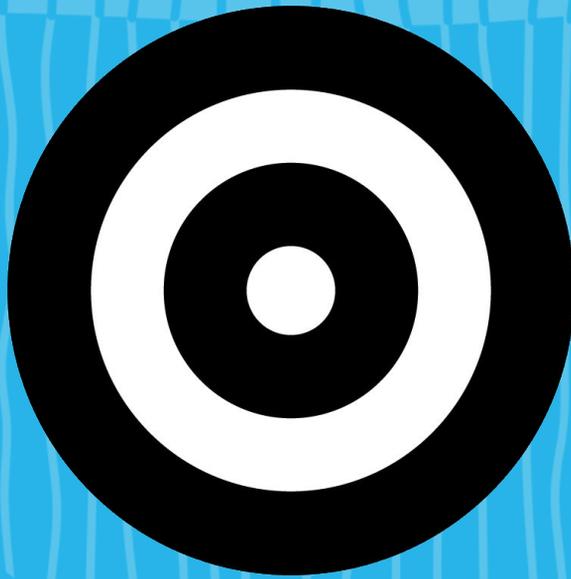
- Antonin Scalia, quoting Bob Dylan

Well they say the sky's the limit.

- Michael Jackson, "Bad"



NAIL DOWN



Avoiding misunderstandings by precisely defining the meaning of a term.

 Rape is a weapon of war aimed at civilians.

- Angelina Jolie, Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict

I could but I don't have the time. And by don't have the time, I mean I don't want to.

- Reddit Forum



“Like...”



Explicit comparison that uses the word “like”.



Sleeping like a log.

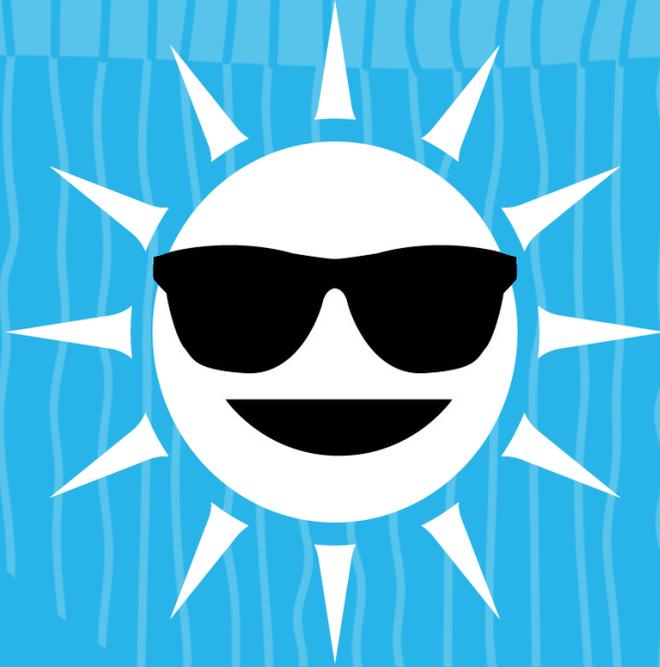
- Saying

Computers are like a bicycle for our minds.

- Steve Jobs



HUMANIZE



Giving voices and emotions to inanimate objects that usually have neither.

What water drinks when nobody's looking.

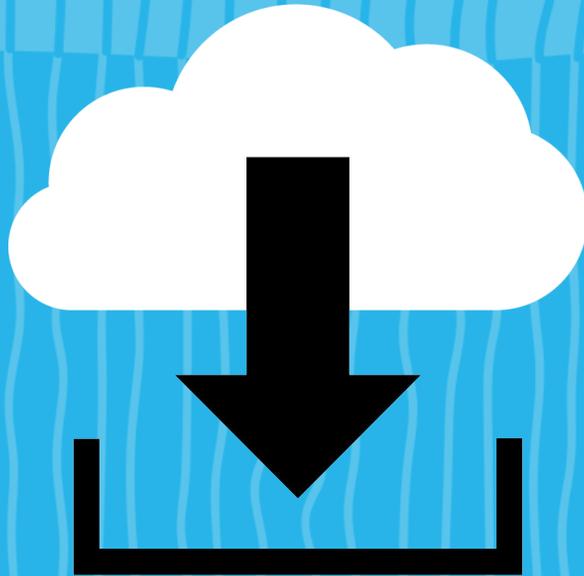
- Nestea

So that we listen to the cry of the earth.

- Pope Francis



ANALOGY



Showing shared characteristics between two objects by using a structure of 'A is to B, as C is to D'.

 He was to the English language as the iceberg was to the Titanic.

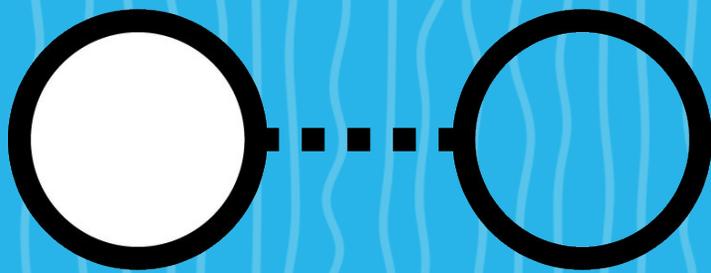
- Journalist describing President George W. Bush

Just as a sword is a weapon of a warrior, the pen is a weapon of a writer.

- Anonymous



METAPHOR



Making descriptions magically vivid by connecting them to different items.

 Our patchwork heritage is an enormous strength.

- Barack Obama

Love's a game, wanna play?

- Taylor Swift, "Blank Space"



SOUNDSWAP



Using words that sound like the object you're describing.



Snap, crackle & pop.

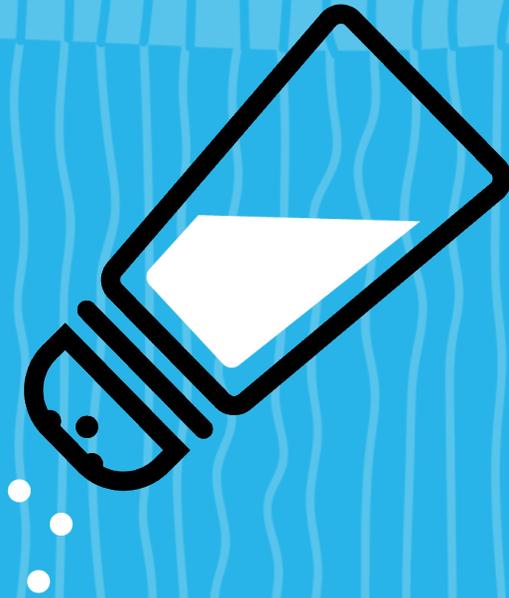
- Kellogg's Rice Crispies

Plop plop fizz fizz, oh what a relief it is.

- Alka Seltzer



SEASONING



Bringing vitality to your speech by using zesty descriptive words.

It was the first computer with beautiful typography.

- Steve Jobs

That frosty mug sensation.

- A&W Root Beer



VIVID



Using vivid descriptions to arouse emotion in your audience.



Look how they massacred my boy.

- The Godfather

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth.

- William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar



SMALL NAME



Deliberately downplaying something by using words that mockingly shrink its importance.

 London to New York - a quick flight across 'the Pond'.

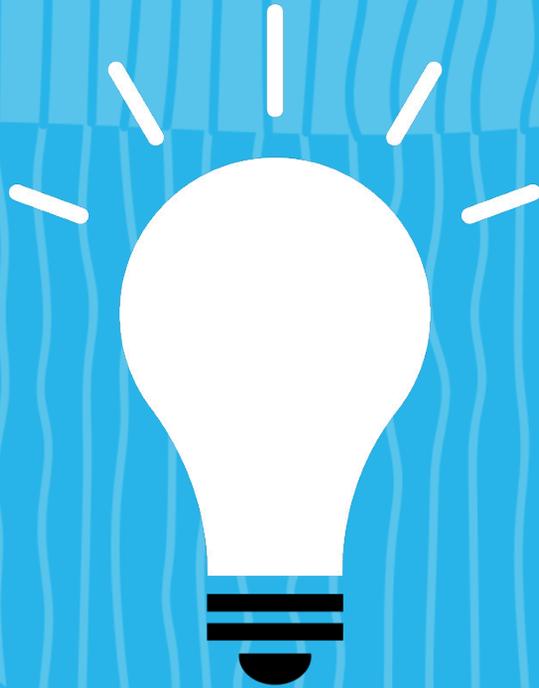
- Anonymous

Time to put on your big boy pants.

- Anonymous



WORDHACK



Creating a brand new descriptive term either by combining two existing words or by inventing something completely new.



Wow, she's really hangry.

- Anonymous

Why does infobesity compromise performance? It's mostly because we human beings can process only so much data.

- Bain



SHRINK



Covertly making something seem smaller by picking a weaker word over a stronger one – phrasing a mountain as a molehill.



Referring to a cut as being a nick.

Referring to a large sum of money as “pocket money”.



STRETCH



Covertly making something appear larger by using a more dramatic word – phrasing a molehill as a mountain.



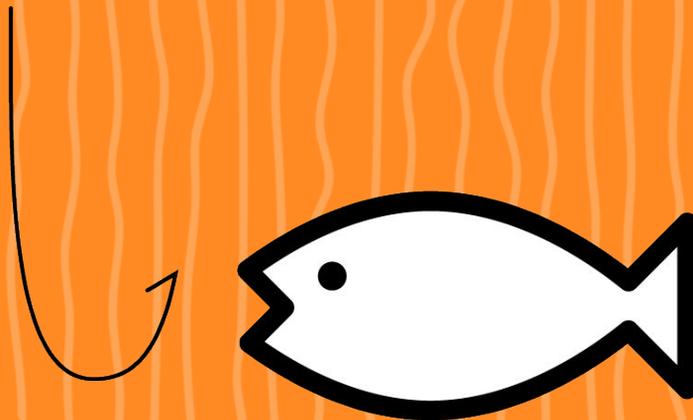
Referring to a cut as being a gash.

At my signal, unleash hell.

- Gladiator



AND THERE'S MORE...



Using a 'not only... but also...' structure to make something seem large or urgent. Often used in advertising.

 This poor girl shouldn't just tell that guy to go jump in a lake, she ought to slash all four of his car tires...

- Jodi Picoult, House Rules

Not only am I not learning, I'm forgetting stuff I used to know.

- The Simpsons



AUTOCORRECT



Dramatic emphasis by describing something, and then coming at your description again but with far stronger words.



You in the presence of a King! Scratch that. You in the presence of a God!

- Jay-Z, “Crown”

He was pleased - no, delighted!

- Destiny’s Shield, The Bellisarius Series



PILE UP



Creating emphasis by piling up words that sound different but have similar meanings.

This parrot is no more... he has ceased to be... he's kicked the bucket... **THIS IS AN EX-PARROT!**

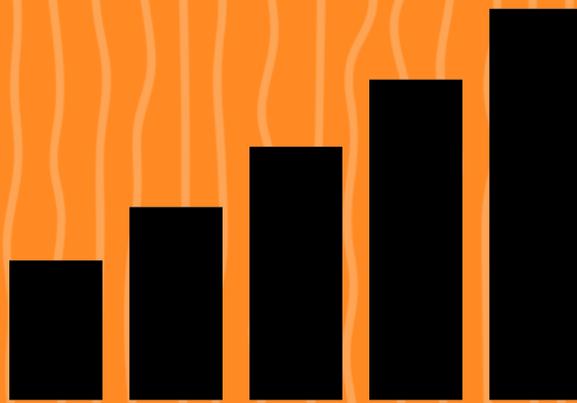
- Monty Python

“Stolen.” said the puppet. “Pilfered. Swiped. Filched...”

- Serpent of Venice



SMALL TO BIG



Making an audience see something as being large by arranging list items in an upward sequence of size.

Why would I spend the rest of my days unhappy, why would I spend the rest of this year alone?

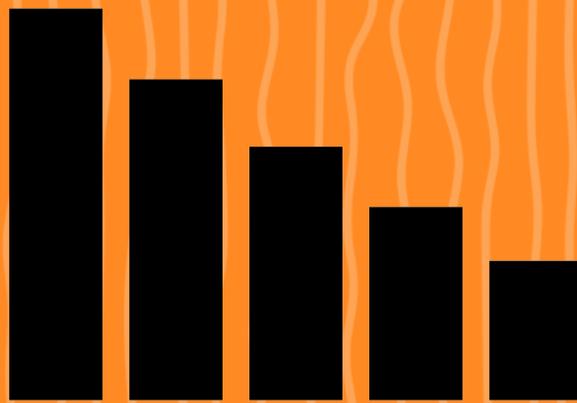
- Mary J Blige, "Therapy"

My mate, Ben. That was a day and a half. I got rope burns off of that kite. And then I got soaked. And then I got electrocuted.

- Doctor Who



BIG TO SMALL



Making an audience see something as small by arranging items in a downward sequence of size.

 Could be miles to go yet. Or... could be thirty feet.

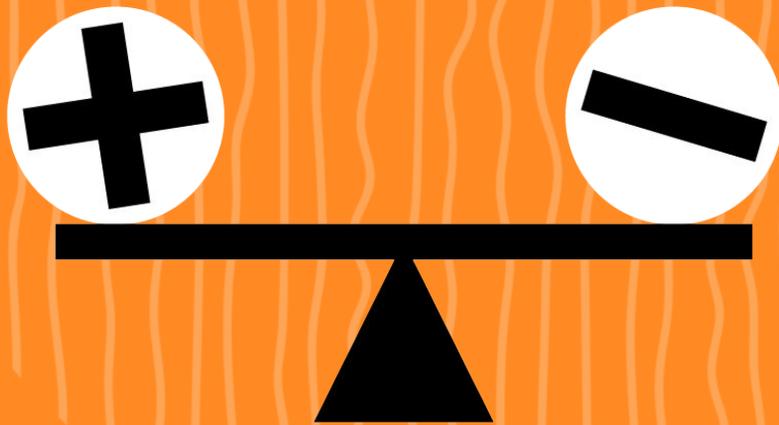
- Doctor Who

Lions led by donkeys.

- WWI Saying



COUNTERPOINT



Shrinking negatives by balancing them against contrasting positives.

I'm just one stomach flu away from my goal weight.

- The Devil Wears Prada

No pain, no gain.

- Anonymous



NOISY COMMA



Making the items in a spoken list stand out dramatically by placing 'and' or 'or' between each item.



Trains and boats and planes.

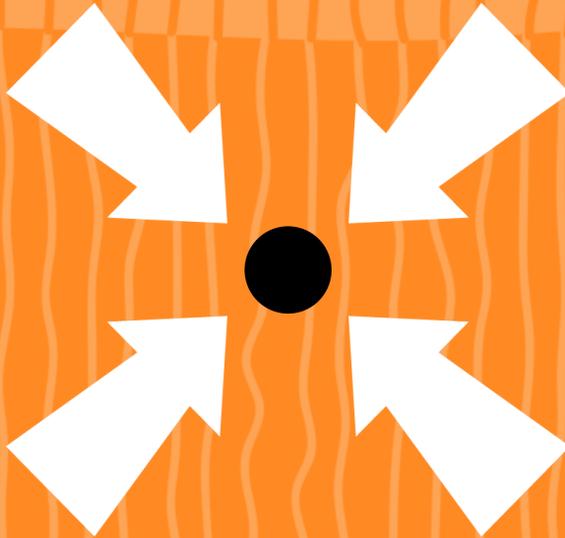
- Burt Bacharach

It is respectable to have no illusions –
and safe – and profitable – and dull.

- Lord Jim



UNDERSTATE



Using a ‘not, un...’ combination lets you make powerful boasts while appearing modestly humble.



It’s not unusual to be loved by anyone.

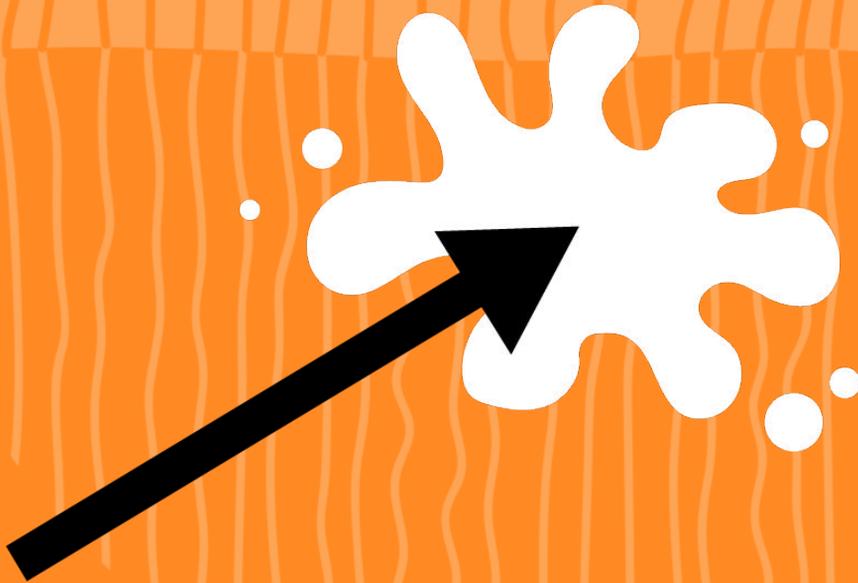
- Tom Jones

We’re not unknown for the quality of our customer service.

- Anonymous



SPLAT!



Creating comedy or tragedy by arranging words in an upward scale, but then deliberately collapsing the end of the sentence.



We can stay up all night swapping manly stories and in the morning, I'm making waffles!

- Donkey, Shrek

The greatest argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter.

- Winston Churchill



ANTICLIMAX

FIRST WORD REPEAT



Creating emphasis by repeating the same words at the start of consecutive phrases.

We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing strips. We shall fight on the hills and on the streets.

- Winston Churchill

I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody.

- On the Waterfront



LAST WORD REPEAT



Creating emphasis by repeating the same words at the end of consecutive phrases.

The government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

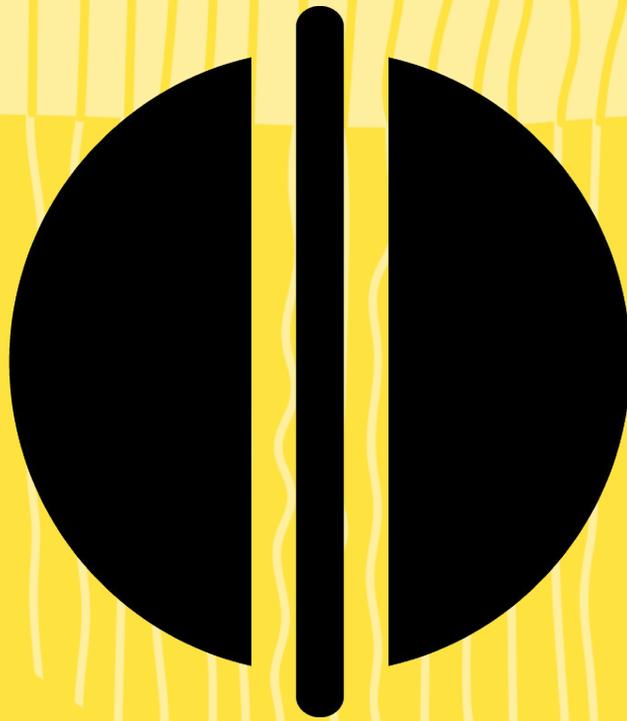
- Abraham Lincoln

Every day is different, like every love is different.

- Mary J. Blige, "Long Hard Look"



A-B-A



Delivering a memorable catchphrase by following the structure A-B-A.



YEAH, BABY, YEAH!

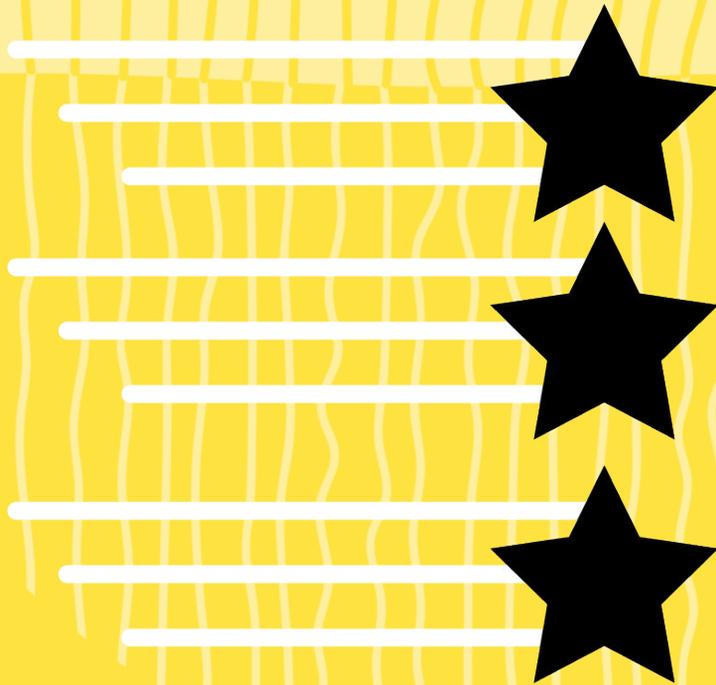
- Austin Powers

Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!

- Martin Luther King Jr.



BACKGROUND



Rhyming or repeating the endings of words to create a soundbite.



Beans means Heinz.

- Heinz

Once you pop, you can't stop.

- Pringles



TRIPLE REPETITION



Hammering home your point by repeating the same word three times.



Keeps going and going and going.

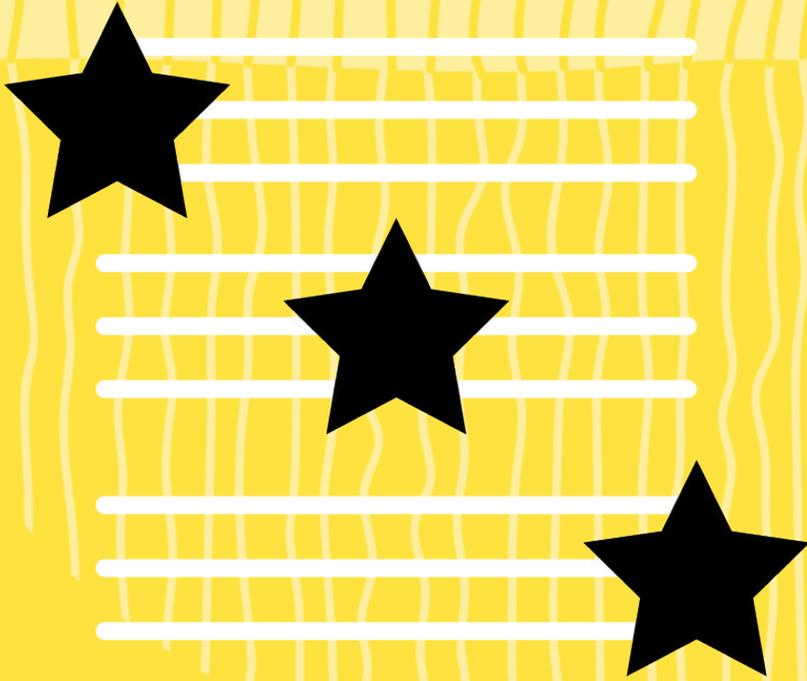
- Energizer

Location, location, location.

- Common Phrase



VOWEL POWER



Rhyming similar vowel sounds across neighboring words.



It beats as it sweeps as it cleans.

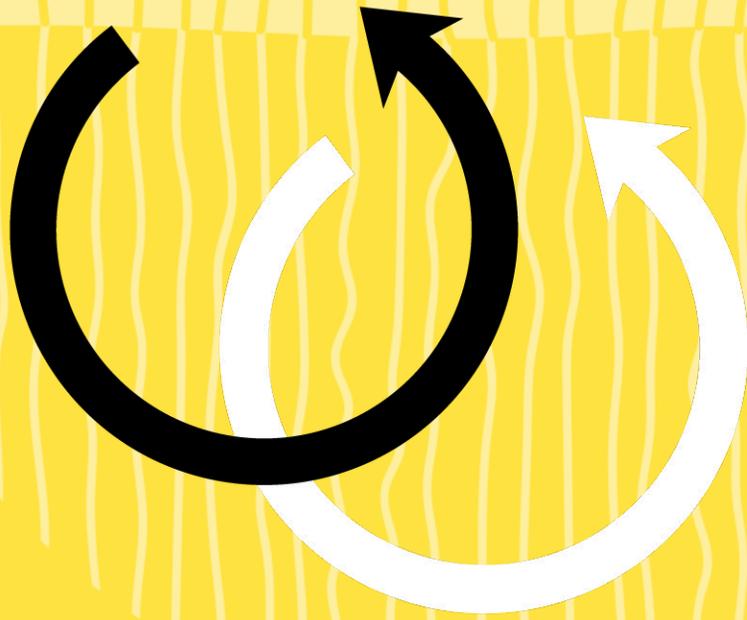
- Hoover

I feel the need, the need for speed.

- Top Gun



FUN PHRASE



Rhyming consonant sounds across neighboring words.

 Guinness is good for you.

- Guinness

If you can't dazzle them with brilliance,
baffle them with bullshit.

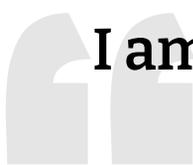
- WC Fields



EVEN ODDS



Slamming contradictory words together to create ear-grabbing descriptions.

 I am a deeply superficial person.

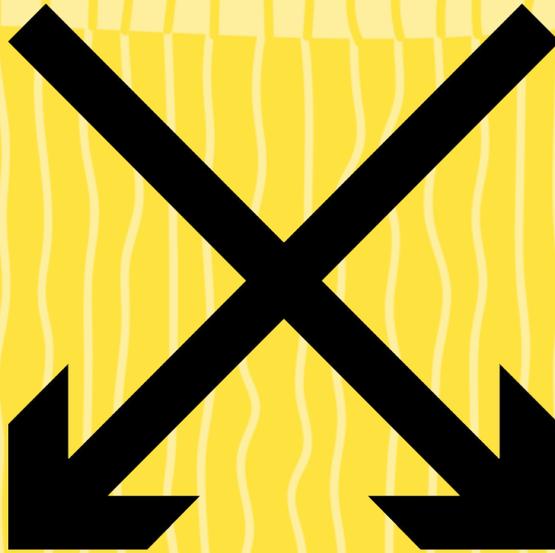
- Andy Warhol

I love mankind... it's people I can't stand!

- the Peanuts cartoon strip



CRISSCROSS



A phrase or an idea that is loosely repeated, but backwards!



All for one and one for all.

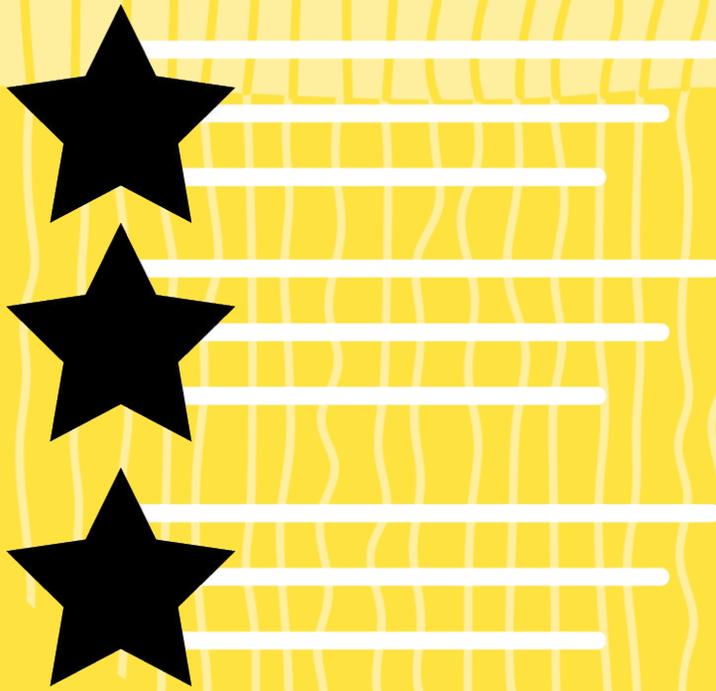
- The Three Musketeers

It's not the men in your life that matters, it's the life in your men.

- Mae West



FORESOUND



Neighboring words that all start with the same letter and sound.

 And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

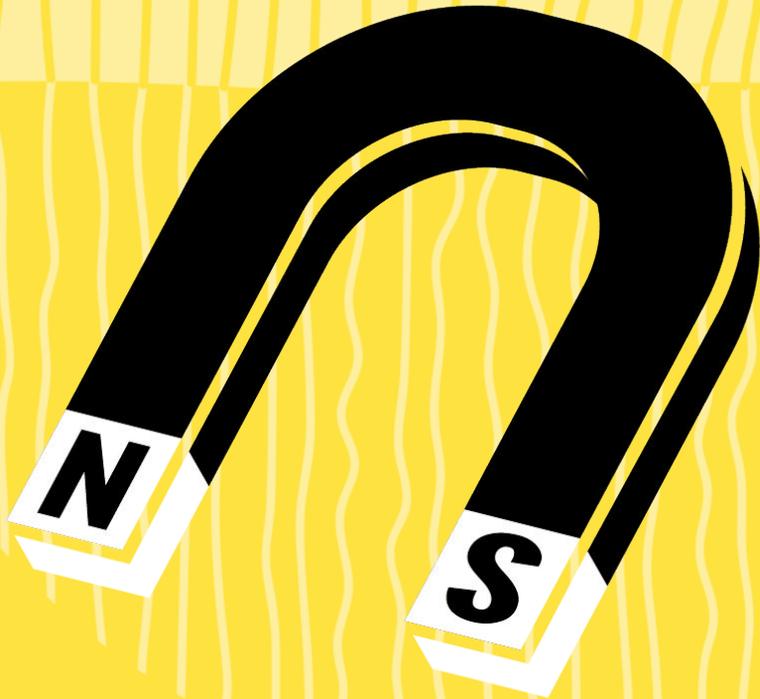
- Louis Armstrong

They are the finest fighting force that the world has ever known.

- Barack Obama



OPPOSITES



Creating dramatic contrast by putting opposite words into the same phrase.



Live free or die.

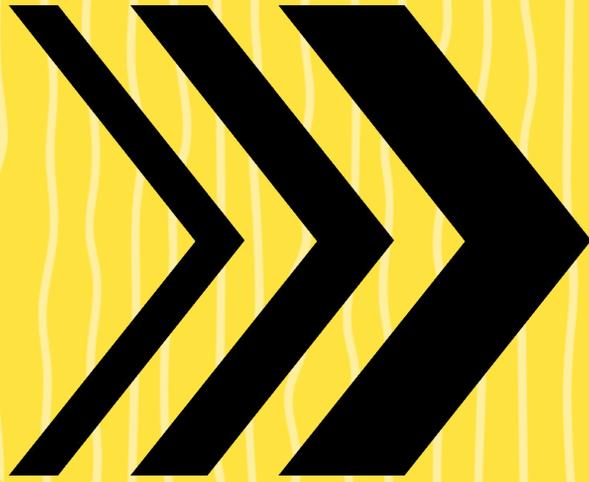
- NH State Motto

I'm a nightmare dressed like a daydream.

- Taylor Swift, "Blank Space"



SPEED LIST



Creating a sense of rush by leaving words like 'and' or 'or' out of lists.

Let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths...

- JFK Inaugural Address

He was a bag of bones, a floppy doll, a broken stick, a maniac.

- On The Road



CLICHE FLIP



Adding a memorable twist to your presentation by putting surprise endings onto well known sayings.

 American Home has an edifice complex.

- American Home Magazine

Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.

- Bruce Almighty



TRIO



Placing together three words or phrases that are all similar in length or structure.

I require three things in a man. He must be handsome, ruthless, and stupid.

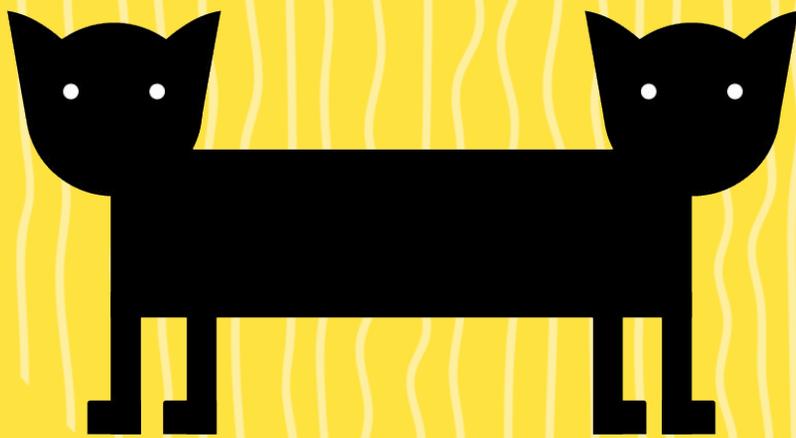
- Dorothy Parker

Be sincere, be brief, be seated.

- President Roosevelt



FRONT & BACK



Creating a dramatic effect by using the same word both at the front and back of a phrase.



Be all you can be.

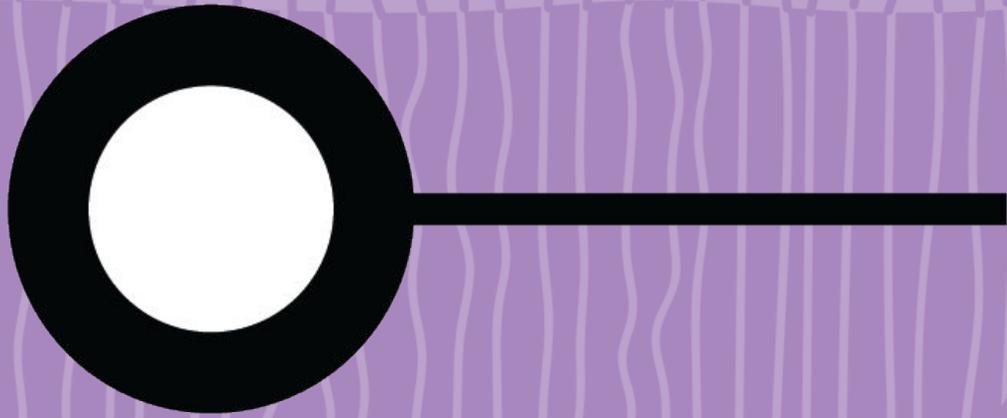
- US Army

Badges? We don't need no stinking badges.

- Blazing Saddles



FOUNDATION



Questions that build context and unearth backstory.

Q What started you down this path?

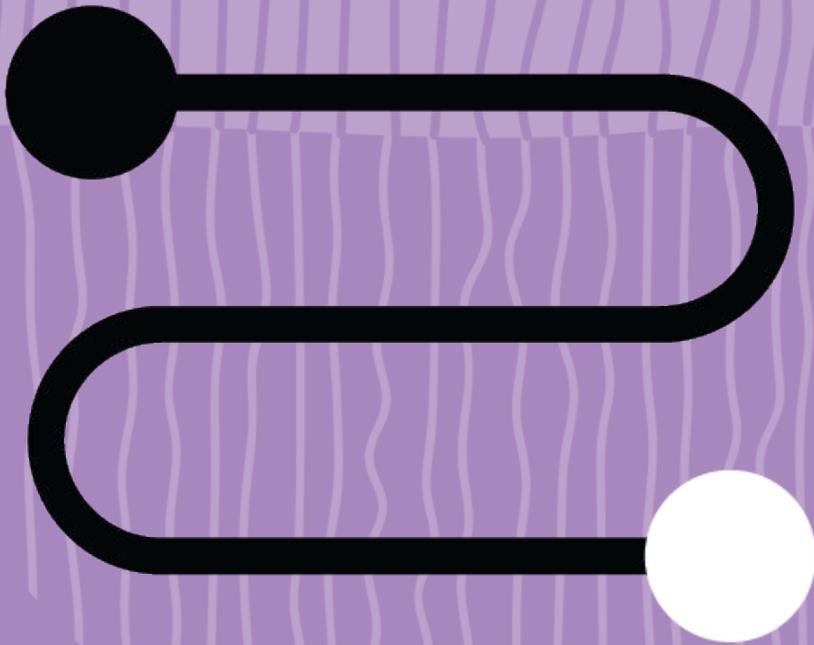
What's the broader context for this?

Who already buys into this concept?

What's the final outcome for this?

?

PATH



Questions that test assumptions and the chain of logic.

How did you reach that conclusion?

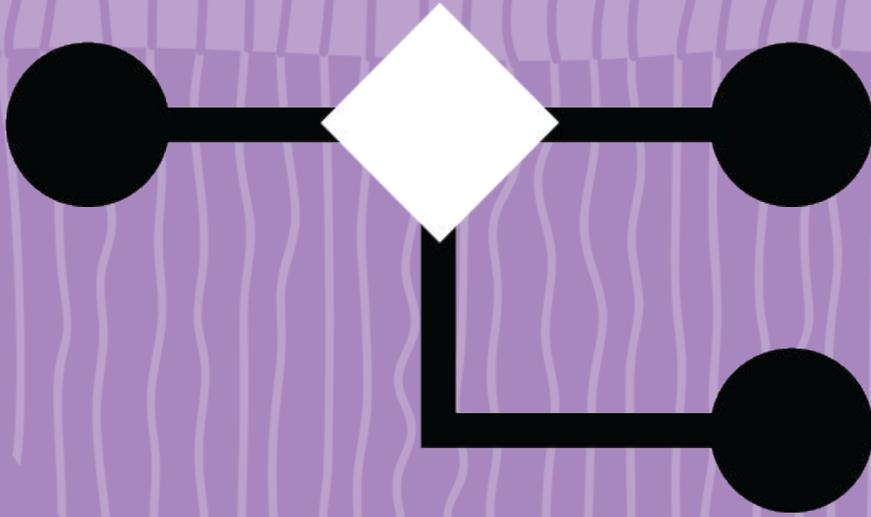
Walk me through your reasoning.

What key assumptions is this based on?

What will break the chain of this logic?

?

PROJECTION



Questions around implications and consequences.

If this happens, what else might happen as a result?

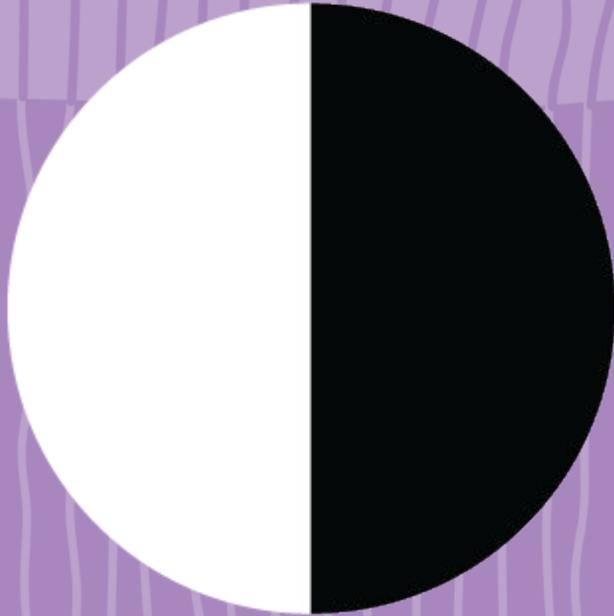
What could be the unintended consequences of this?

What are the positive impacts of this?

What are the negative impacts of this?

?

COUNTERS



Questions to identify counter arguments and flaws in thinking.

 What other perspectives should be considered?

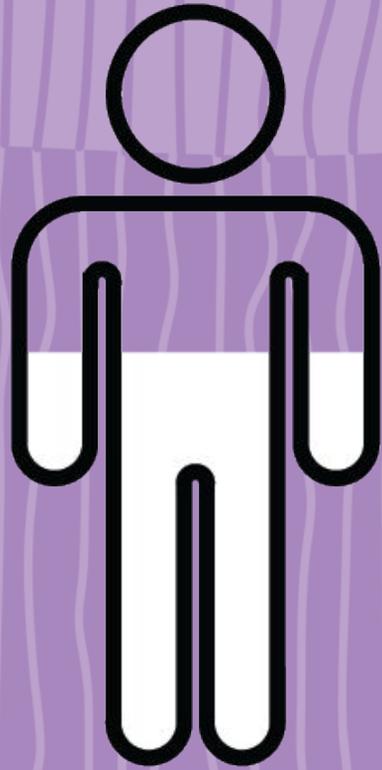
What disagreements will others put forward?

Are there rival ideas that might compete for attention?

What could go wrong?

?

MODESTY



Putting an audience off-their-guard by getting them to underestimate your skills or knowledge.



...Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking...





The How Company

About fassforward.

Over the years, clients have come to call us “The How Company” because we keep it practical, outcome-based, and rooted in neuroscience — all to help our clients learn, lead, and communicate more effectively.

We work in two areas:
Business Leadership and
Business Storytelling.

Our [Coaching](#) is a thinking partnership to help leaders think differently and create outcomes.

Our [Training](#) programs focus on closing the “Thursday-Monday gap” — the gap between ‘aha’ and practical application at work.

